

### ABSTRACT

The present invention concerns application of digital rights management to industrial automation devices including programmable logic controllers (PLCs), I/O devices, and communication adapters. Digital rights management involves a set of technologies for controlling and managing access to device objects and/or programs such as ladder logic programs. Access to automation device objects and/or programs can be managed by downloading rules of use that define user privileges with respect to automation devices and utilizing digital certificates, among other things, to verify the identity of a user desiring to interact with device programs, for example. Furthermore, the present invention provides for secure transmission of messages to and amongst automation devices utilizing public key cryptography associated with digital certificates.